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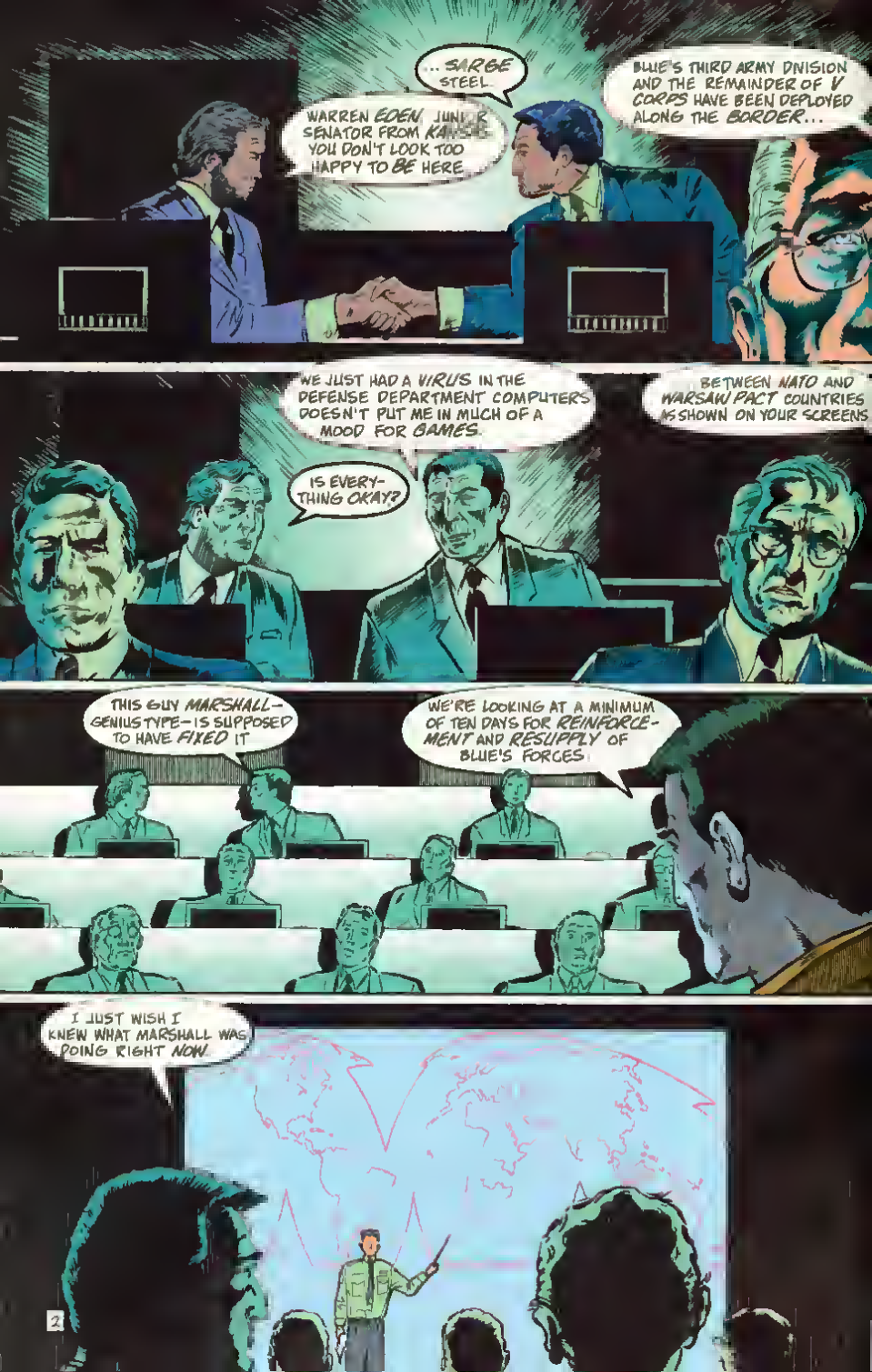
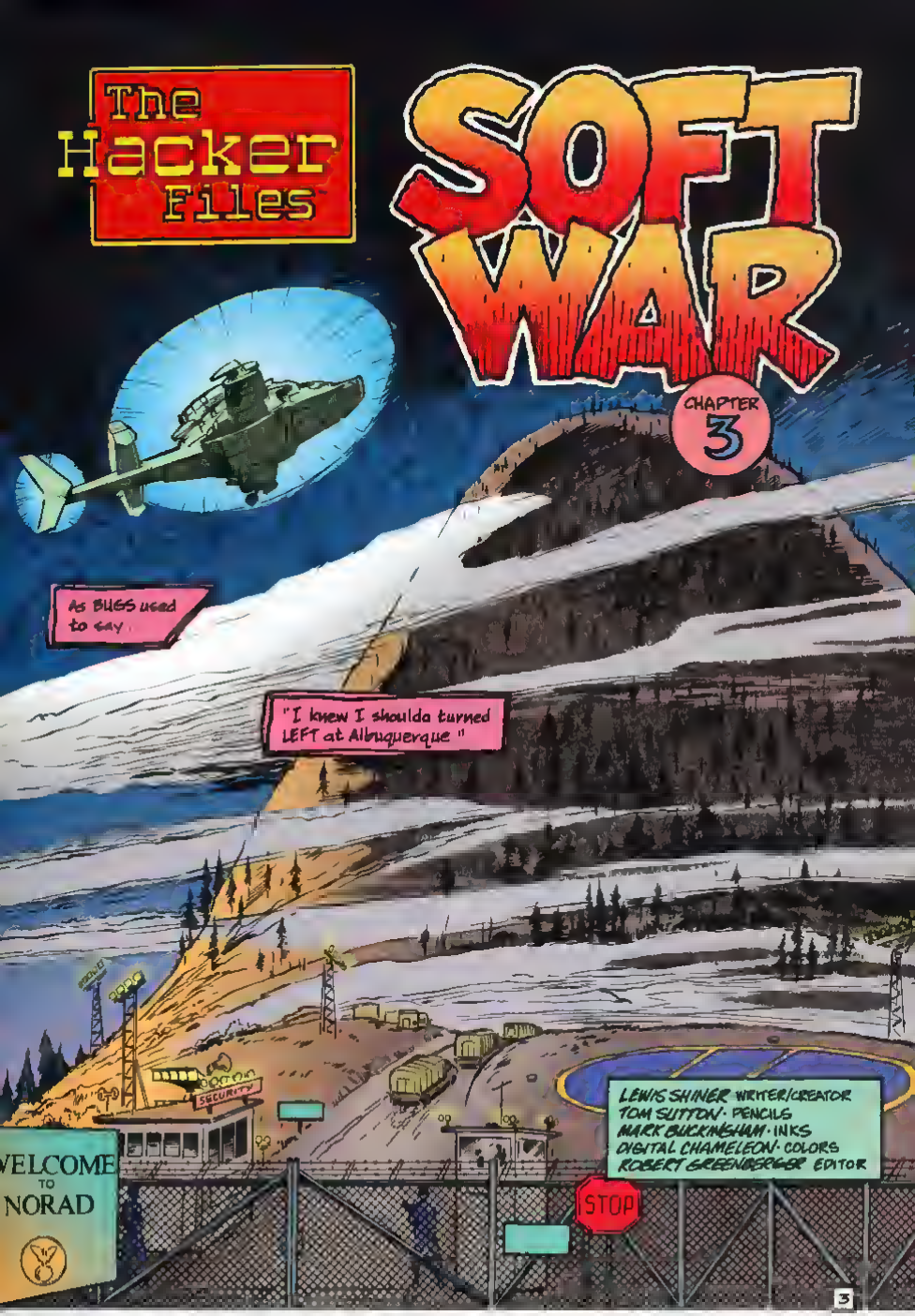
The Hacker Files

SoftWar(3.0)

by Lewis Shiner, Tom Sutton & Mark Buckingham

Saving the world isn't the piece of CAKE I expected
THE COPTER'S WAITING
YEAH, BUT STEEL...
STEEL'S OCCUPIED
Thought I'd pulled it off from here at the PENTAGON Instead I'm headed for CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN
They parked the chopper on the LAWN this time The HEAT is ON
I still wish I could talk to STEEL...


... SARGE STEEL
WARREN EDEN, JUNIOR SENATOR FROM KANSAS. YOU DON'T LOOK TOO HAPPY TO BE HERE.
BLUE'S THIRD ARMY DIVISION AND THE REMAINDER OF V CORPS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED ALONG THE BORDER...
WE JUST HAD A VIRUS IN THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT COMPUTERS. DOESN'T PUT ME IN MUCH OF A MOOD FOR GAMES.
IS EVERYTHING OKAY?
BETWEEN NATO AND WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES AS SHOWN ON YOUR SCREENS.
THIS GUY MARSHALL—GENIUS TYPE—IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE FIXED IT.
WE'RE LOOKING AT A MINIMUM OF TEN DAYS FOR REINFORCEMENT AND RESUPPLY OF BLUE'S FORCES.
I JUST WISH I KNEW WHAT MARSHALL WAS DOING RIGHT NOW.



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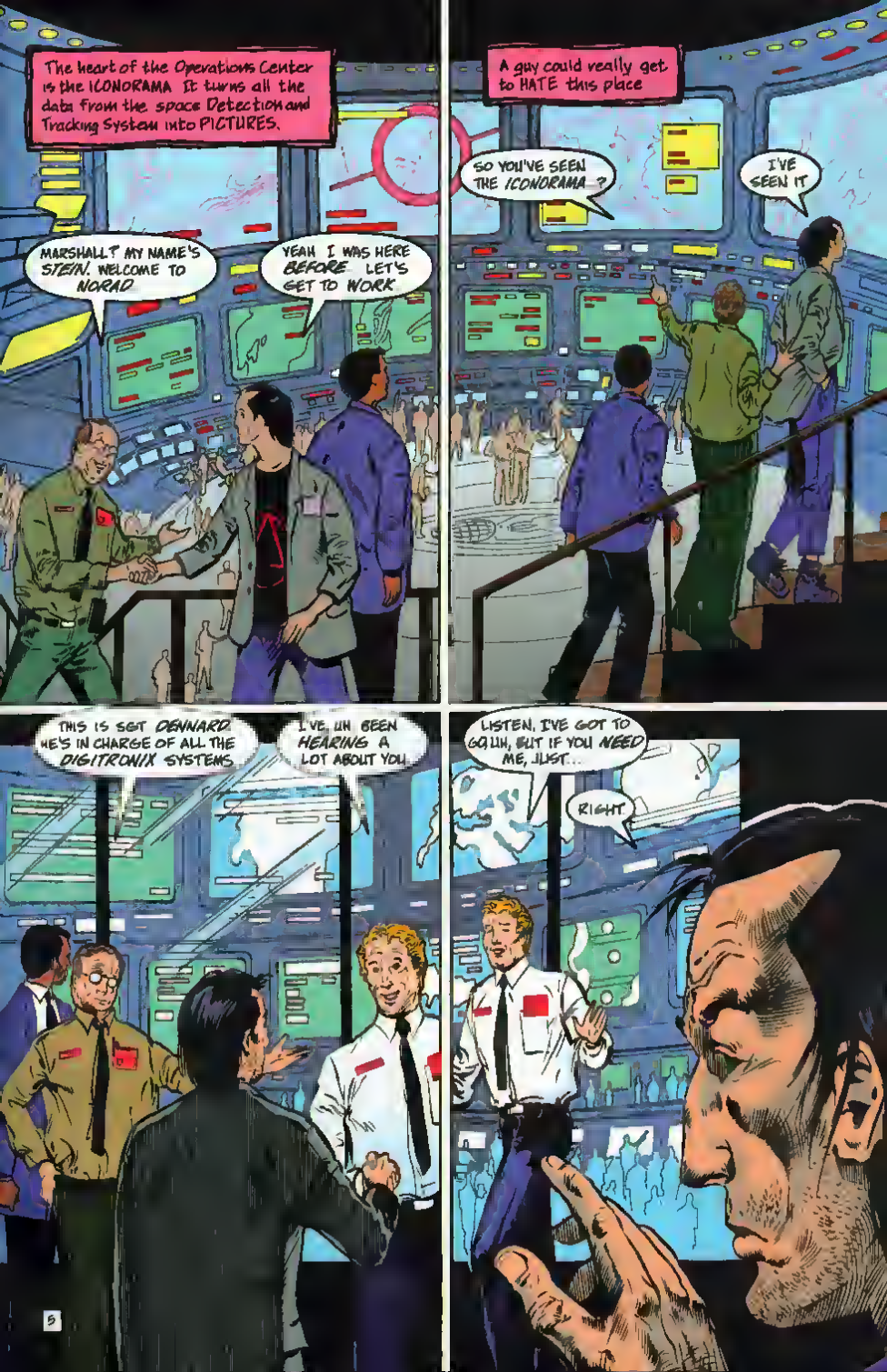
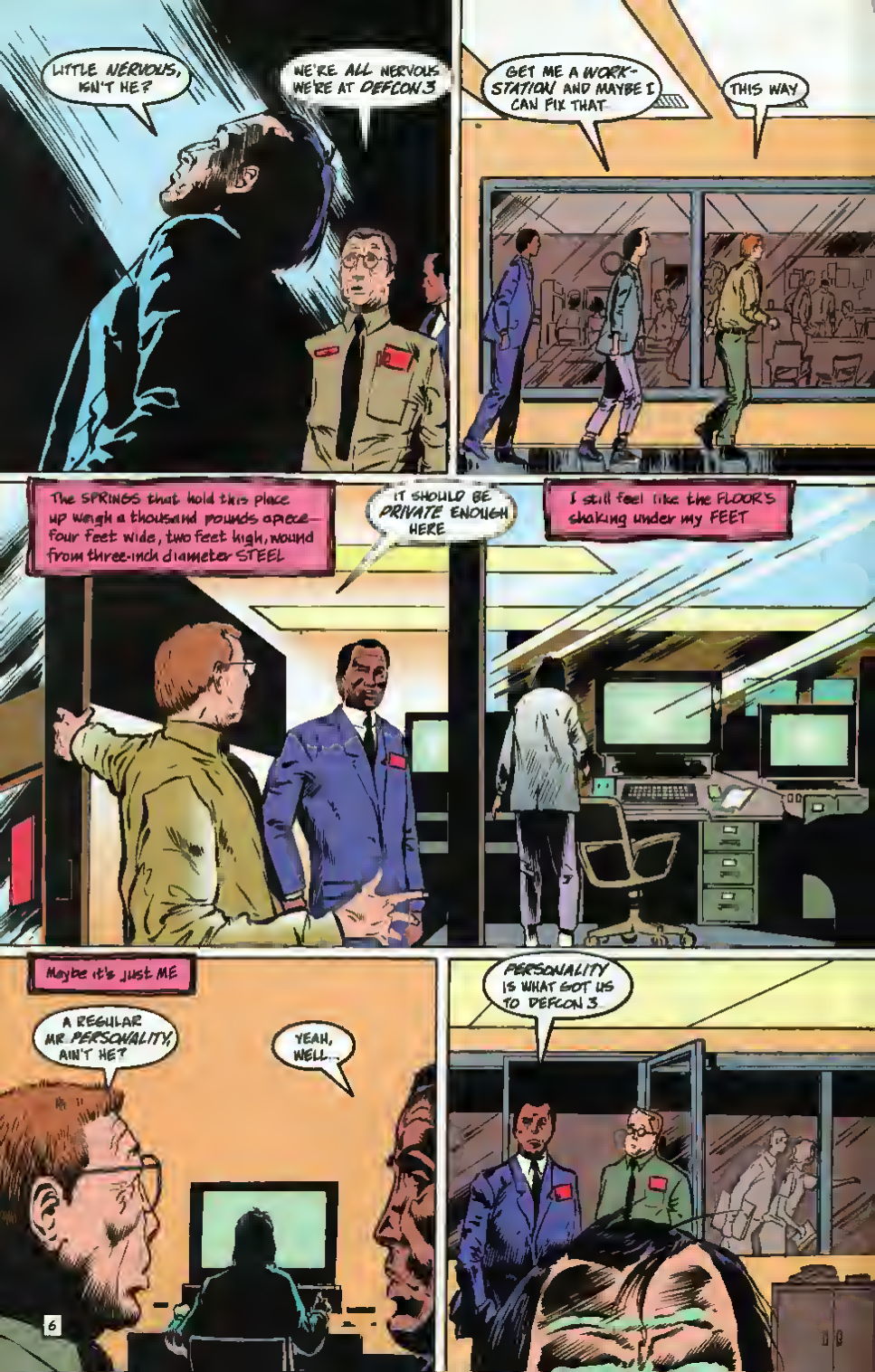
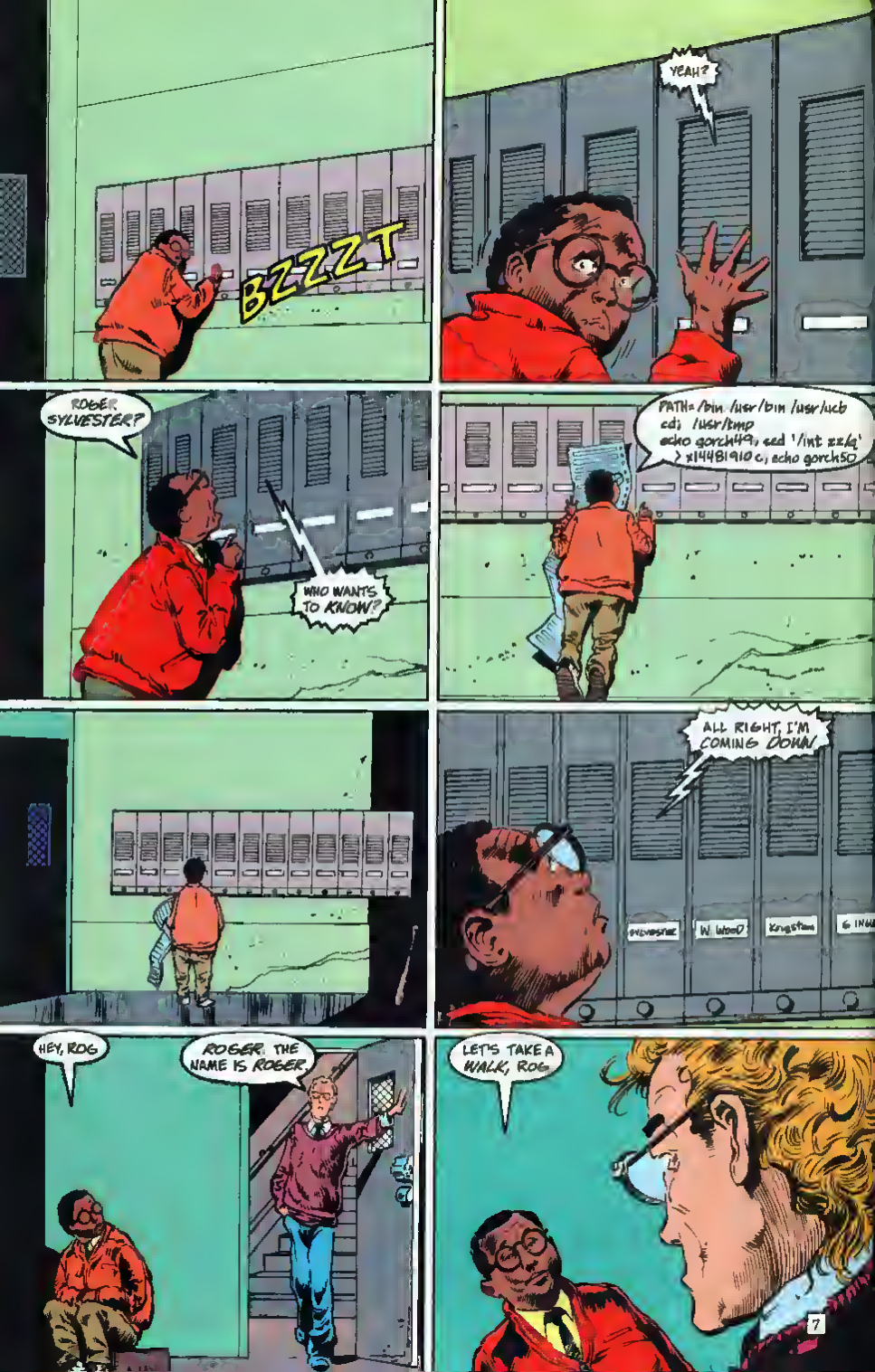
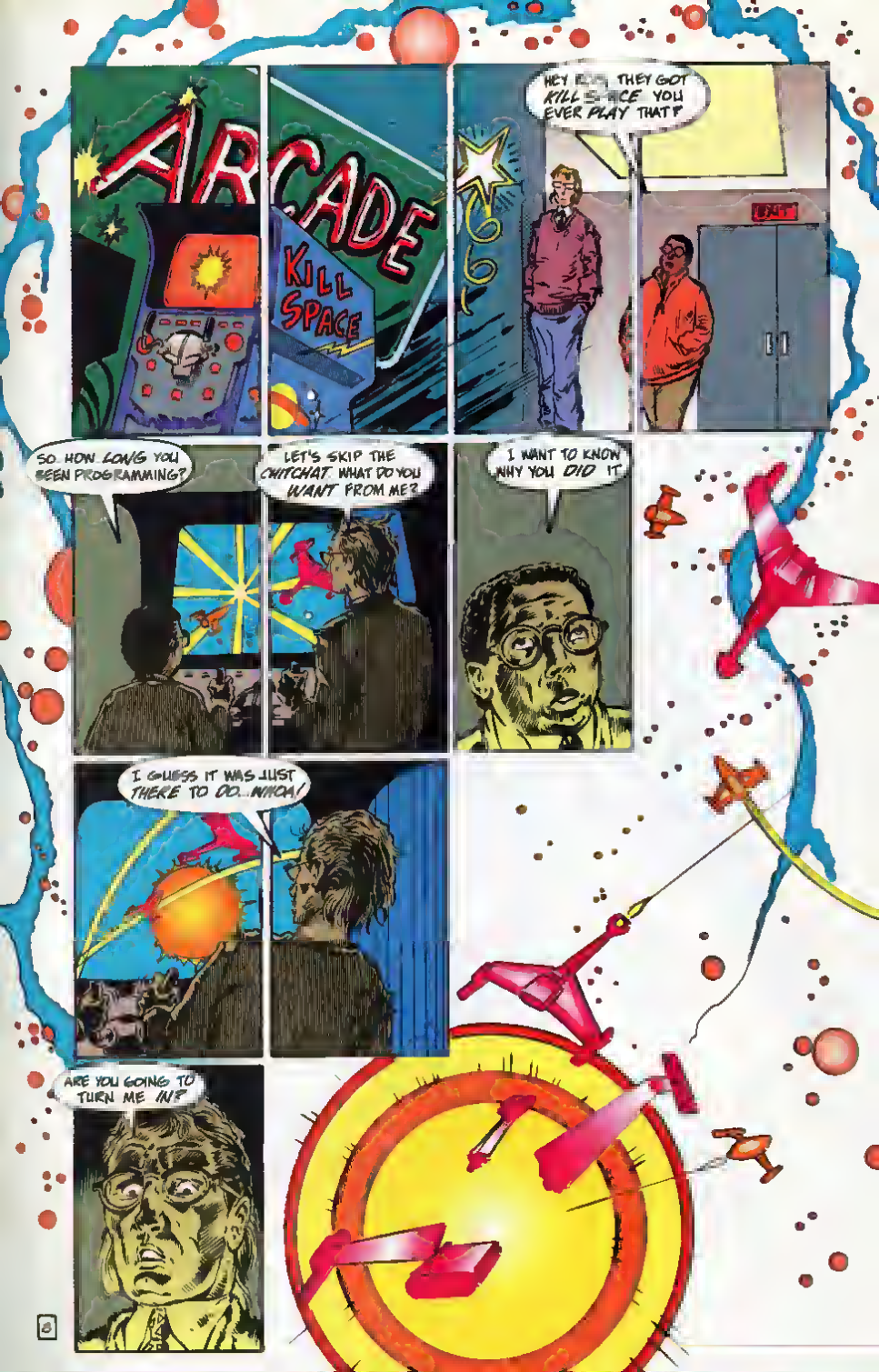
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Bros. Inc. Company

NORAD wanted a bombproof Combat Operations Center so they carved a MILLION TONS of granite out of the middle of Cheyenne Mountain
NORAD
CLEARANCE 22'
They've got 90 separate COMPUTERS in here and a MILLION MILES of communication lines
They put 11 steel BUILDINGS inside - 8 of them 3 stories high They're supported by 1,319 giant SPRINGS
The two back-to-back steel BLAST DOORS weigh 30,000 lbs. each Only ONE of them is ever open at a time, and they can close and lock in 30 seconds.
NORAD
There are close to 3 miles of tunnels, and each of the chambers is covered by a reinforced concrete DOME
RESCUE
U S GOVERNMENT USE ONLY


The heart of the Operations Center is the ICONORAMA It turns all the data from the space Detection and Tracking System into PICTURES.
MARSHALL? MY NAME'S STEIN. WELCOME TO NORAD
YEAH I WAS HERE BEFORE LET'S GET TO WORK
A guy could really get to HATE this place
SO YOU'VE SEEN THE ICONORAMA ?
I'VE SEEN IT
THIS IS SGT DENNARD HE'S IN CHARGE OF ALL THE DIGITRONIX SYSTEMS
I'VE, UH BEEN HEARING A LOT ABOUT YOU
LISTEN, I'VE GOT TO GO UH, BUT IF YOU NEED ME, JUST...
RIGHT
5


LITTLE NERVOUS, ISN'T HE?
WE'RE ALL NERVOUS WE'RE AT DEFCON 3
GET ME A WORK-STATION AND MAYBE I CAN FIX THAT
THIS WAY
The SPRINGS that hold this place up weigh a thousand pounds apiece—four feet wide, two feet high, wound from three-inch diameter STEEL
IT SHOULD BE PRIVATE ENOUGH HERE
I still feel like the FLOOR'S shaking under my FEET
Maybe it's just ME
A REGULAR MR. PERSONALITY, AIN'T HE?
YEAH, WELL...
PERSONALITY IS WHAT GOT US TO DEFCON 3
6

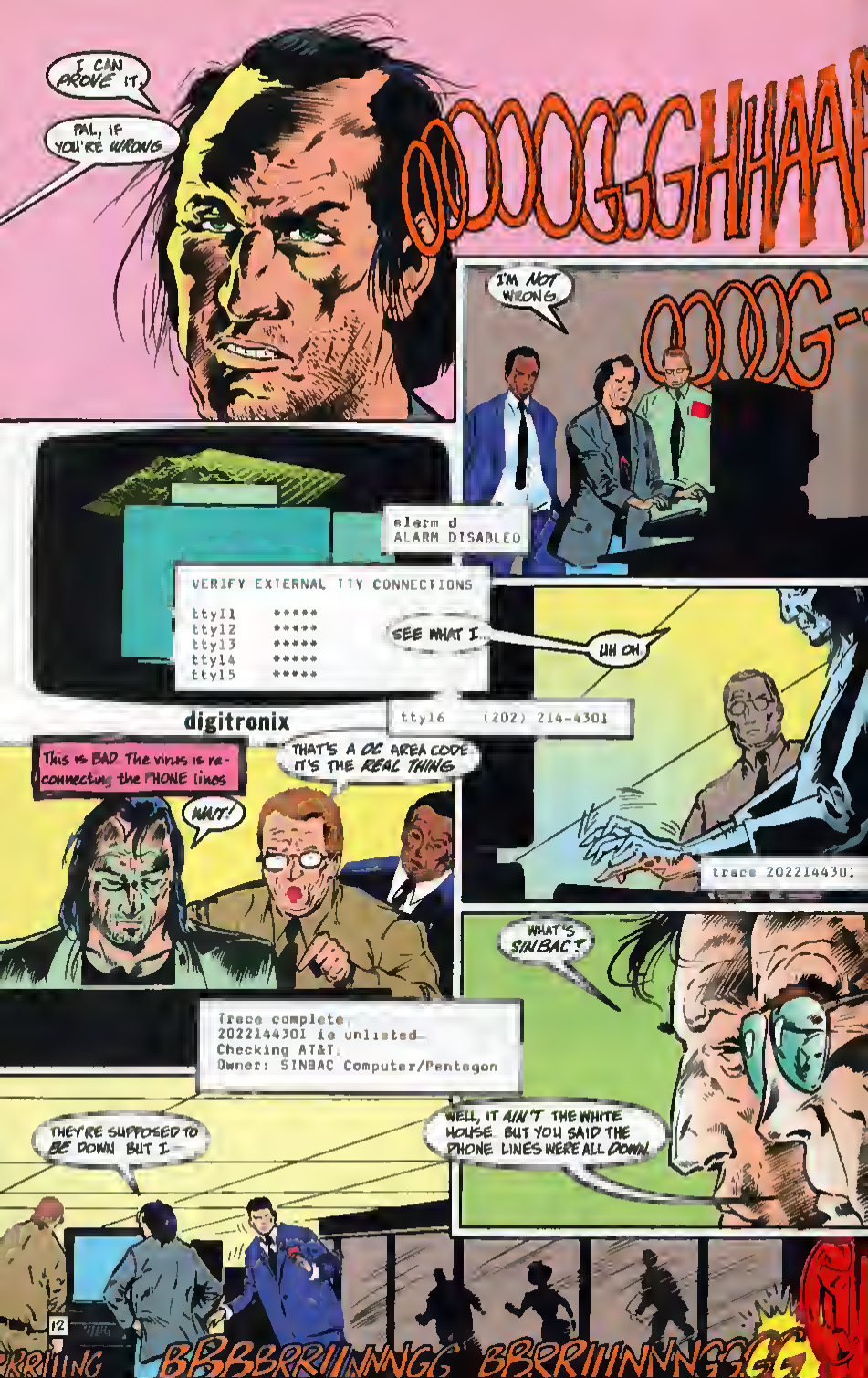

BZZZT
YEAH?
ROGER SYLVESTER?
WHO WANTS TO KNOW?
PATH=/bin:/usr/bin:/usr/ucb cd; /usr/tmp echo gorch49; sed '/int zz/q' > x1448191 0 c; echo gorch50
ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING DOWN!
HEY, ROG
ROGER. THE NAME IS ROGER.
LET'S TAKE A WALK, ROG


ARCADE
KILL SPACE
HEY [illegible] THEY GOT KILL SPACE YOU EVER PLAY THAT?
EXIT
SO. HOW LONG YOU BEEN PROGRAMMING?
LET'S SKIP THE CHITCHAT. WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
I WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU DID IT.
I GUESS IT WAS JUST THERE TO DO...WHOA!
ARE YOU GOING TO TURN ME IN?

DONORS PAID
BLOOD BANK
DONORS PAID
MOM SPLIT WHEN I WAS A KID. ME AND DAD MOVED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, EVERY FEW MONTHS IT SEEMED LIKE
ALTEUS SANDWICHES CIGARS
FOUNTAIN LUNCHEONETTE
LUNCHEONETTE
DAD WASN'T HOME MUCH BUT THE COMPUTER WAS ALWAYS THERE. AND ALL THESE PEOPLE ON THE OTHER END.
YEAH I KNOW JUST WHAT YOU MEAN!
COME ON UP! I'LL SHOW YOU SOME OF THE STUFF I'VE BEEN WORKING ON.
.. AND THIS IS A GENERAL LEDGER I'VE BEEN DEBUGGING.
IF YOU CONDENSED THESE THREE LINES AND PUT THEM INTO A SEPARATE FUNCTION
9

YEAH, PEACE, ROG
LISTENING WKFC
MIKEY?
Master Blaster/ I just talked to Sylvester, and I got news...
TAP-TAPA TAP A TIC TAP TAPTIK-TIK TAK TAPPY TIC TAPTIT TAP-TIK TAP TA

UH OH
Options: 1 Diplomacy
2 Naval attack
3 Missile launch menu
Enter number or initial letter/
NOW WHAT?
OOOGHHAAA
digitronix
LAUNCH ORDERS FROM WASHINGTON, PAL. YOU'LL HAVE TO CLEAR THE AREA.
BULLSHIT.
OOOGHHAAA
THE PHONE LINES ARE DOWN, REMEMBER?
IT'S THE VIRUS, NOT A LAUNCH ORDER.
AOOOGHHAA


I CAN PROVE IT.
PAL, IF YOU'RE WRONG
OOOOGGHHAA
I'M NOT WRONG
OOOG-
alarm d
ALARM DISABLED
VERIFY EXTERNAL TTY CONNECTIONS
tty11 *****
tty12 *****
tty13 *****
tty14 *****
tty15 *****
SEE WHAT I
UH OH
digitronix
tty16 (202) 214-4301
This is BAD The virus is re-connecting the PHONE lines
THAT'S A DC AREA CODE IT'S THE REAL THING
WHAT!
trace 2022144301
WHAT'S SINBAC?
Trace complete.
2022144301 ie unlisted
Checking AT&T.
Owner: SINBAC Computer/Pentagon
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOWN BUT I—
WELL, IT AIN'T THE WHITE HOUSE. BUT YOU SAID THE PHONE LINES WERE ALL DOWN!
12
BBBBRRIINNNGG
BBRRIIINNNGG

YEAH THE LINES ARE DOWN RIGHT.
IT'S FOR YOU
JACK MARSHALL, PLEASE.
HELLO?
I'M ON THE HIGHWAY TO HELL
HACKER, IT'S SUE MASTER BLASTER FOUND SYLVESTER
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
PHREDDY SAYS IF YOU'RE ON A DIGITRONIX HE CAN FIND YOU AND HE DID
BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT M.B SAYS SYLVESTER'S A PHONY
WHAT?
Sylvester's crufty code
The real virus
HE DIDN'T WRITE THE VIRUS M.B. SAW SOME OF HIS CODE AND HE SAYS IT REALLY SUCKED

THEN WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
THE GUY HAS ABOUT 40 GRAND WORTH OF BRAND-NEW DIGITRONIX GEAR. I GOT INTO THE COMPANY FILES AND CHECKED IT OUT
HE DIDN'T PAY A DIME FOR IT.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT DIGITRONIX...
When you know what you're LOOKING for, it gets easier. And here it is.
Detective time. If Digitronix DID plant the virus, then the business with the phone lines may NOT be an ACCIDENT

...PLANTED THE VIRUS? IF YOU'VE GOT A BETTER STORY...
HOLY CROW!
GOING!
VCOM.doc
It's a heavily encrypted DISK FILE that the virus has been reading for further INSTRUCTIONS
Instructions on reconnecting PHONE LINES and copying FILES across them
Somebody's been in here BEFORE me, maintaining this file Somebody HERE, in Cheyenne Mountain
15

Which means it's an INSIDE job
YOU SAY THIS DENNARD GUY IS IN CHARGE OF THE MACHINES?
YOU NEED TO TALK TO HIM?
YEAH
GET ME SGT DENNARD
DENNARD WHERE ARE YOU?
MISSILE ROOM WHAT'S UP?
MARSHALL WANTS TO TALK TO YOU SOMETHING ABOUT THE COMPUTER
DENNARD?
THAT'S FUNNY I LOST HIM
YEAH, IT'S HILARIOUS. WHICH WAY TO THE MISSILE ROOM?

FORGET IT, PAL. NO CIVILIANS IN THE MISSILE ROOM. EVER.
ONE OF THESE DAYS, "PAL," YOUR RULES ARE GOING TO BLOW UP THE WHOLE PLANET.
EASY, MARSHALL. I'LL HANDLE THIS.
THE NSA TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY. LET'S SEE THAT MISSILE ROOM.
THIS WAY, GENTLEMEN.
DENNARD!
rm vcom.doc
rm dennerd.
rm
17

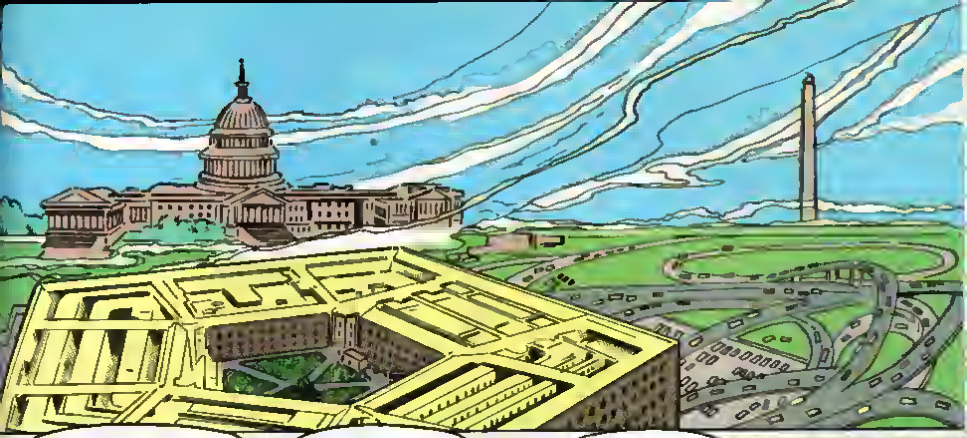
HOLD IT, PENNARD!
OH, CRAP.
ARE YOU NUTS? PUT THAT AWAY!
NO ENTRY
GOT SOME REINFORCEMENTS
CALL SECURITY
AND MARSHALL DOESN'T WANT THEM TO SHOOT ANYBODY.
CODE ORANGE

DENNARD, WAIT!
Jesus...
MP
DENNARD! I JUST WANT TO TALK!
...we're headed...
DANGER
RESTRICTED
AREA
...right for the...
EMERGENCY
ACCESS ONLY
ALARM WILL SOUND
...TUNNELS.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

EFFFFFFFFFFF

WHAT HAPPENED? DID HE FALL? OR JUMP?
WHO CARES? HE'S DEAD EITHER WAY
SAVE THE EMOTIONAL CRAP FOR LATER. WHAT WAS HE DOING ON THAT COMPUTER?
YEAH, YEAH. OKAY
WELL?
HE GOT IT ALL. ALL THE EVIDENCE.
THE UP SIDE IS THE PHONE LINES ARE PROBABLY SECURE
vcom.doc
File not found
dennerd.*
File not found
PROBABLY?
THAT'S THE BEST I CAN TELL YOU UNTIL I GET BACK TO THE PENTAGON.

THE MISSILES ARE IN LOCAL MODE. YOU CAN LAUNCH FROM HERE. BUT DON'T DO IT WITHOUT DIRECT ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT
There are still too many QUESTIONS
Who really wrote that VIRUS?
MARSHALL?
Why would DIGITRONIX plant it?
THANKS.
YEAH
THE PENTAGON, JAMES, AND STEP ON IT
Why FRAME the Sylvester kid?
YOU GOT IT, BUD
And what the hell is SINBAC?
NO ENTRANCE
RESTRICTED AREA
STOP



AS YOUR SCREENS SHOW, TWO RED DIVISIONS IN THE FOLLOW-ON ECHELON ARE THREATENING OUR BLUE 3RD DIVISION.
WE ESTIMATE 12 TO 24 HOURS BEFORE A 20 KM HOLE IS OPENED IN OUR DEFENSES.

I SAY WE USE THE TACTICAL NUKES.

THAT'LL HOLD 'EM TILL WE GET OUR REINFORCE-MENTS IN PLACE.
THIS IS GIVING ME THE CREEPS.

I MEAN, THIS GUY IS TALKING NUCLEAR BOMBS FOR GOD'S SAKE.

To Be CONCLUDED...

usr/hacker/mail

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Preview copies of HACKER FILES #1 were sent to some of DC's regular correspondants, and here's what we got back:

Dear Mr Greenberger,

Although I am far from being an expert on computer lingo, I found myself immersed, easily following the unfolding storyline. It seems very promising, and I look forward to future installments.

The decision to exclude costumed characters shouldn't impede the storytelling, as long as you flesh out other characters like Jack Marshall and Serge Steel. The appearance of Steel certainly cements THE HACKER FILES within the DC Universe, and could lead to the guest-starring of other DC agencies like Checkmate, the Suicide Squad, S.T.A.R. Labs, and IMHS. Also, such characters could easily operate within the storylines here. It would draw in readers, hopefully on a permanent basis.

The writing is interesting and crisp. Tom Sutton's art never fails to impress me, and besides writing wall, Lewis Shiner's lettering was excellent. The overall look is very good, and I hope this alternative comic book finds an audience with not only DC fans, but others as well.

Jody Wayde Hamby
Rt 1 Box 480
Robbins, TN 37852

Thanks for the good words. It was never my intent to exclude all costumed characters from THE HACKER FILES. For instance, I'm a big fan of SUICIDE SQUAD, whose Barbara Gordon/Oracle probably uses a Digitronix, as does a certain bat-eared character, who keeps his in a cave. Stay tuned.

* * * * *

Dear Bob,

I remain the victim of some prejudices regarding Lewis Shiner. The biggest has to do with TIME MASTERS, which I bade a happy farewell with #3 I've tried to be fair and thoughtful—I read "Soft War" three times—and this is what I came up with.

Jack Marshall's attitude vexed me. I imagine it was meant to, in part, and that part of it was meant to be exhilarating—who wouldn't like to tell Serge Steel where to get off (this is for Ben Turner, you bum!!!!)?—but in his vision of where "your tax dollars" would go, I heard the sound of someone who could truly make a difference if he'd only go through the legitimate channels (as opposed to yours truly, who's too messed up to make any difference at all). Jack, however, will prefer to grumble and groan; he will glory in his anarchism, and his "freelance gig" will have little in common with, say, Jon Sable's. In listing Tom Sutton's credentials in the text page, Lewis omitted one recent credit: First's *Squalor*. Jack Marshall is tougher than Harry Keller, but the same air of *seediness* hovers over both men, and Harry's *cri de coeur* was, basically, "I came, I saw, I want to go home."

That's not Jack's, I can tell: Jack made ruins for Steel, and he insisted on Yoshio and Charlie being pulled from the system. (When Steel hesitated, he did it himself.) He poked his nose where it wasn't meant to go, and this took him to Sutcliffe earlier than he probably expected. Under the scruffiness is a good man who looks after his speed-metal friends and mourns a taco-eater who turned into a corporate stooge, certainly he's more appealing than the creeps (Jeff excepted) in the first three issues of TIME MASTERS. There was sufficient danger in the references to Sutcliffe to make his final panel appearance full of menace; the catchiness of names like "Dr. Zen" and "Sue Denim" gave the speed metal kids their own special aura; but Jack's true passion was being able to describe his world.

Lewis was informative here without being pedantic, yet a lot of Jack's spiel felt reminiscent of Oracle in SUICIDE SQUAD, especially her recent struggles with Cliff Carmichael, the New Thinker. The virus was more threatening than Barbara and Cliff's video games, but, all the same, it took up a lot of space—and the shock of the Tempest Fils Servar was a trifle out of date. Granted, the Joint Chiefs of Staff make great targets, but with recent developments in the East (if not in China, so your Tienenman Square story shouldn't feel anachronistic), we can relax our guard somewhat. (Politics is an honorable adventure, y'know, and those who aren't in it shouldn't knock it. Unless they vote regularly.) Regrettably, the photocopy mangled the effect of pages 14 and 15, but for a layman, I can at least understand what's going on.

Tom Sutton's art was most impressive; with each fresh glance at Jack, I see less and less of Squalor, save for the slovenliness, for which he at least has an excuse ("you said not to peck"). Mark Buckingham's *Miracleman* work I've also admired, and his finishes went well with Tom's layouts. What I'd love to be able to praise would be the coloring, since Lovern Kindzierski's work delights me wherever it appears, and I'm sure it would have the magic of DR. FATE and sheer scope of L E G I O N here. But I'll wait and see, and...

And you're on trial. I'll read the "Soft War" story line and see whether I'm hooked. If I am, I'll call down for further passwords. But whatever else happens, I'll probably never look at WordPerfect the same way again.

Charise J. Sperling
Apt 4-C
37-15 Parsons Boulevard
Flushing, NY 11354-5814

As far as the cold war plot being anachronistic, I'll just have to ask you to look on this first four-issue arc as a piece of historical fiction. It was written in the spring of 1989, soon after the actual incident that inspired it; unfortunately it took long enough to produce and publish that current events have changed our perspective.

However, let's all still keep an eye on those Joint Chiefs. I don't consider politics an "honorable adventure"; I recommend a dose of C-Span to anyone who does. I suspect Marshall would say that voting is well and good when you are offered a real choice. When you aren't, voting can simply ratify an inhumane and corrupt system.

* * * * *

Dear People,

My first impression, not having read the cover letter carefully, is that this will make an excellent miniseries. In the first issue we have a handful of strong, well-defined characters, and a solid problem to solve; however, these are not characters that I particularly like. None of them. I mean, I like them as *characters*, but I don't like them as *people*. And that distinction can mean the difference between a successful miniseries and a flop ongoing series. I'd be willing to put up with all these obnoxious people for four issues; I'm not sure I could take them forever. Let's face it, everyone in this book is either a government or corporate hack, or someone who enjoys invading other people's privacy. Neither type is what I'd call likable.

Art? I liked it. The backgrounds on pp. 14-15 were particularly nice, giving a good feeling for the unthinking, unfeeling logic of a computer. I know from personal experience that a computer does not do what you want it to do, only what you tell it to do. The difference is often enormous, and usually frustrating. You've captured that nicely.

So the bottom line becomes: Will I buy it? The answer is yes. I *will* pick up the first handful of issues, mostly to see how the story turns out. But, if the story drags on interminably, or if no truly likable characters are introduced (or if the existing characters fail to

show more likable aspects), I'll drop it. And, I'd venture to say, so will a lot of other people.

Good luck with this series. I've a feeling you're gonna need it.

Dr. Rex
2917 Westbrook Drive #108
Fort Wayne, IN 46805

* * * * *

Dear Bob,

If you guys heard someone exclaiming, "It's a virus. It's a virus," that was me.

I don't admit to being computer literate, but I did write a short paper on computer viruses for a class a couple of years ago. THE HACKER FILES #1 tapped into the same interest that made me choose that topic then.

For his first time lettering a comic book, Lewis Shiner did a fine job. Of course he did get advice from a master—Todd Klein. The variable structure of the pages is visually stimulating. Keep that up.

It's difficult to imagine what the final artwork will look like before Lovern Kindzierski has performed his wizardry. So I'll comment on it in a subsequent issue.

This is a daring, unlikely ongoing series, but if the interest level is maintained, you should do well. And you've picked some powerful topics for future issues.

Melissa Page
236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

* * * * *

Dear Bob,

So, HACKER FILES #1, the Great Experiment? It's gutsy, I'll give ya that. When you think about it, HF is actually two experiments: a comic without any super-heroes and also a comic targeted at an audience that doesn't necessarily read comics. Good luck!

A super-hero-less comics series is nothing new, at least for the independent comics companies. But for DC, it's like when McDonald's started serving Mexican food! The closest DC has come to a comics series like this has been GREEN ARROW and EL DIABLO (where there were no super-villains or special powers, and the costumes were incidental and often not even worn by the "hero"), and to an extent SUICIDE SQUAD (where the protagonists usually don't even wear their costumes and use their powers sparingly, and the non-powered characters are the major players). But HACKER FILES is different; it goes all the way to the extreme: mainstream DC Universe (where super-heroes do exist) with no costumes or powers appearing, just normal people. My mind is still reeling from the concept.

Then there is the second experiment. Since you probably won't attract a large percentage of regular comic book readers with a "no-powers" series, you're instead aiming very obviously for a very specific new market: computer users. As I said, gutsy. Granted, there are many BBSs that exclusively handle comics discussions, but you'll still need a good percentage of the non-comics-reading NETsters to really keep this book going. Keep your fingers crossed that word-of-modem will carry your message (although the idea of taking letters of comment directly from the nets is truly inspired and will probably "net" you most of your readers).

What did I think of HF#1 personally? The art was exceptional—welcome back, Tom! But the writing didn't thrill me. The comic seemed divided into three simultaneous aspects: a SysOp User's Manual full of enough technical jargon to choke on, a first-person anti-government rallying speech, and word-bubble dialogue. I'm a computer user who really hasn't gotten too involved with the nets yet, so maybe I'm the exception to the rule with my being turned off by the purposefully-accurate and in-depth computer stuff. But as for the Anti-Nuclear, Anti-Government pontificating (yes, it felt like I was being lectured to), it seemed rather inappropriate, especially since I read HF #1 the same night that President Bush made his speech about ending the arms race. Not to say that I'll be voting Republican in '92 or anything, but I just feel that this stop-the-crazy-generals-who-want-to-destroy-the-"evil"-Commies plotline would have worked better when Reagan was still President. On the other hand, maybe I'm just a victim of government propaganda, and Lewis Shiner is doing the right thing by telling us we can't relax yet. Who knows?

At any rate, I *will* be buying the first few issues of HACKER FILES to see where it goes. But Mr. Shiner is going to need to make me feel comfortable with his characters and writing style if he wants to keep me. Right now, I'm curious but by no means impressed. We'll see what happens, and I'll let you know by issue #4 if I'll be sticking around permanently.

Captain Jon Lane
Executive Officer,
USS Avenger NCC-1660
Special Projects Advisor,
Starfleet Region 7
1150 Park Avenue #3F
New York, NY 10128-1244

Computer users are just one audience we're aiming for. We also want to pull in readers interested in current events, and plain old comics readers who like a good story that doesn't necessarily involve guys in colored tights hitting each other.

* * * * *

Dear Bob,

This certainly is a different series from anything else DC is currently publishing, and for that alone you and Lewis Shiner should be commended. HACKER FILES clearly is attempting to appeal to a new market, though I fear it may simply become a cult title among the computer audience already reading comics. I suppose your marketing will determine this.

Nevertheless, HACKER FILES has much to recommend it. At the outset it appears to be a book geared to computer operators, those familiar with the jargon and knowledgeable and excited about these machines. This audience, your key constituency, will find this to their liking. The technical aspects appear correct (or accurate enough to satisfy users), and the computer networks are well depicted, in fact HACKER FILES illustrates the computer as an active, thrilling tool, one that serves as the lead into another world. Those familiar with this world will find this title fun and exciting. Unfortunately, that's not everyone.

What makes up for this is the drama. Lewis is onto an interesting espionage tale. Marshall is a wonderful antihero, and the government is an ominous, undefeatable foe. I think anyone can feel for Marshall's struggle, as well as empathize with his curiosity. It's evident that Lewis has plotted this most intricately, and has utilized intriguing topical issues as a basis for his story. Strong stories are crucial to the survival of this book. You must remember that you're writing for a more literate audience, one that will demand more than "A vs. B" plots.

Tom Sutton's art is wonderful, quite nice in black and white. The one problem I foresee is the continued layout of scenes with a man in front of a computer. Comics are a visual medium, yet a person sitting and typing is not very exciting. How many ways can this be shown? It's a tricky task that few can pull off. I wish him luck, as he will have to bring to life many intangible elements; however, please try to avoid our protagonist "entering" the computer. I find it trite when a hero enters an imaginary computer world; keep us based in "reality," thank you.

And I? I've a mixed reaction to HACKER FILES #1. I enjoyed it for the story end, standing on its own, it is an interesting tale; however, I'm not sure of its long-term appeal. I do applaud you for attempting such a radical concept and for reaching out to new markets. I'm looking forward to seeing how you develop this series, and whether you can pull off the challenges in the limitations you've set for yourself.

Mark Lucas
1100 Granville Avenue #2
Los Angeles, CA 90049

* * * * * *

Dear Bob,

I must say I'm surprised. I didn't really think I'd like it, after all, NO COSTUMED HEROES—NO LEAPING TALL BUILDINGS—NO DARK CRUSADERS SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS! No way, I thought.

Yet I did indeed enjoy the story. The characters are well presented and interesting. Even with only the partial introduction one always gets in first issues, they grabbed the reader.

The art is excellent! To be truthful the art has to grab me or no matter how good the story, I probably won't come on board any title. But the art (even in Xeroxed black and white) is an eyecatcher.

All in all, an excellent first issue. I will look for the finished work when it hits the stands. Oh yes, this all comes from one who is only marginally into computers. I'm not a hacker by any stretch of the imagination. Word processing and some graphics work is about the extent of my abilities. So if it can grab me and make sense, all concerned have done a good job on the computechnical end of things.

Thanks again for the preview. I do look forward to seeing HACKER FILES at my local comics outlet (Oxford Comics—shameless plug).

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NEXT ISSUE: The wrap-up of "Soft War": Marshall gets heavy, war games get deadly, and a mushroom cloud blossoms over New York City...

—Lewis Shiner

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